

New York Trawl Gear Characterization
Prepared by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

1.1 TRAWLS

1.1.1 Otter Trawls

1.1.1.1 Gear Description

The minimum mesh size for trawl nets targeting summer flounder is 6.5 inches (15 centimeters) diamond or square, unless the fisherman has a small mesh exemption certificate from the US Department of Commerce (6 NYCRR Section 40.5(b)). The minimum mesh size for trawl nets targeting winter flounder is also six inches (15 centimeters) square, but this requirement is expected to be amended in early 2006 (Young 2005). The minimum mesh size for trawl nets targeting weakfish is four inches (ten centimeters) square (6 NYCRR Section 40.5(d)). The minimum mesh size for trawl nets targeting scup and black sea bass is 4.5 inches (11 centimeters) diamond, and roller rig or rock hopper gear cannot be equipped with rollers greater than 18 inches (46 centimeters) in diameter (6 NYCRR Section 40.5(f) and (g)). Trawls targeting tautog cannot have roller rig or rock hopper gear equipped with rollers greater than 18 inches (46 centimeters) in diameter (6 NYCRR Section 40.5(h)). For a general description of bottom otter trawls see section 4.1.2.1 of the main appendix.

1.1.1.2 Gear Deployment

For a general description of how otter trawls are deployed see section 4.1.2.1 of the main appendix.

1.1.1.3 Targeted Species

New York's otter trawl fishery is a very mixed species fishery. Otter trawl fishermen landed 76 species of finfish and crustaceans in 2003. The major species caught included billfish, butterfish, summer flounder, winter flounder, yellow-tail flounder, monkfish, silver hake, Atlantic mackerel, scup, black sea bass, longfin squid, and weakfish. Other species, considered bycatch but landed with some degree of regularity, included striped bass, Atlantic cod, American John dory, conger eel, sea robins, American shad, smooth dogfish, spiny dogfish, skates, tautog, and tilefish (Young 2005).

1.1.1.4 Number of Licensed Fishermen

All commercial fishermen who fish trawls must hold a New York State commercial food fish license. Fishermen taking summer flounder must hold a summer flounder permit. The number of licenses and permits issued from 2000 to 2004 is available in Appendix 2.

1.1.1.5 Effort

For areas closed to trawling, see ECL Section 13-0341. Effort by geographic area, depth fished, month, and time of day is not readily available and would require a considerable effort to tabulate. New York is in its third year of requiring State license holders to submit Vessel Trip Reports. Following the conclusion of the 2005 reporting year a

request of the New York VTR for 2003, 2004, and 2005 could provide effort information (Young 2005).

1.1.1.6 Status of the Fishery

New York Food Fish Licenses are controlled by legislative limits on the numbers that can be sold (see ECL Section 13-0328). The number of food fish licenses decreased from 2000 to 2004 (Table 2-1).

1.1.1.7 Sea Turtle Bycatch

A number of studies have been conducted on the occurrence and activity of sea turtles in New York's waters (Morreale and Standora 1993, 1998, 2005; Reynolds and Sadove; CRESLI). These studies provide some information on interactions between sea turtles and fishing activity. From 1988 to 1992, Morreale and Standora conducted a mark-recapture study in New York waters. In all, there were 337 captures of 228 individuals, including mostly loggerheads (56%) and Kemp's ridleys (27%). Commercial fishermen accounted for 84% of the captures, and 93% of these fishermen were pound net fishermen. Trawlers reported 16 captures (Morreale and Standora 1998). There is no state-run observer program for the otter trawl fishery. In addition, DiGiovanni et al (2000) report a green sea turtle recovered from a trawl net off Robins Island. The animal was rehabilitated and later released (DiGiovanni et al. 2000). A leatherback sea turtle came in on a trawler into Shinnecock in 1993. This turtle was tagged and released offshore (DiGiovanni, pers. comm. 2006).

1.1.1.8 Laws and Regulations

The minimum mesh size in the cod end of trawl nets targeting summer flounder is six inches (15 centimeters) square (6 NYCRR Section 40.5(b)). The minimum mesh size for trawl nets targeting weakfish is four inches (ten centimeters) square (6 NYCRR Section 40.5(d)). The minimum mesh size for trawl nets targeting scup and black sea bass is 4.5 inches (11 centimeters) diamond, and roller rig or rock hopper gear cannot be equipped with rollers greater than 18 inches (46 centimeters) in diameter (6 NYCRR Section 40.5(f) and (g)). Trawls targeting tautog cannot have roller rig or rock hopper gear equipped with rollers greater than 18 inches (46 centimeters) in diameter (6 NYCRR Section 40.5(h)). The NYSDEC has species-specific regulatory authority, but no authority to regulate gear.

WORKS CITED

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APPENDIX 2. LICENSES AND PERMITS ISSUED FROM 2000 TO 2004

Table 2-1. The number of licenses and permits issued from 2000 to 2004

License/Permit Type	Number Issued				
	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Resident Food Fish License	1,287	1,225	1,197	1,153	1,131
Non-Resident Food Fish License	66	57	50	54	49
Marine Bait License	28	34	43	56	58
Striped Bass Permit	0	0	554	555	545
Summer Flounder Permit	359	360	357	349	347
Resident Horseshoe Crab Permit	0	322	330	311	306
Non-Resident Horseshoe Crab Permit	0	11	13	10	10
Lobster Bait Gillnet	50	60	63	60	63
Menhaden Purse Seine License	23	20	4	21	20
Resident Whelk License	0	237	269	292	276
Non-Resident Whelk License	0	16	15	15	12
Resident Crab License	697	683	675	649	629
Non-Resident Crab License	31	30	34	34	32
Resident Lobster License	657	600	554	506	477
Non-Resident Lobster License	48	45	40	38	36
Lobster Landing License	13	10	12	13	14
Resident Non-Commercial Lobster License	882	996	1,051	940	932
Food Fish Landing License	46	46	46	50	45
Party/Charter Boat License	401	443	474	496	492